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Russell Favors Testing For U. S. Neutron Bomb

Sen. Richard B. Russell said yesterday the United States should resume atmospheric tests until it perfects the neutron bomb — a weapon which would kill humans but leave property intact.

The Georgia Democrat gave no indication that he believed a neutron bomb test was in sight. But Rep. Albert Thomas (D-Tex.) hinted that the United States might decide shortly to resume some form of above-ground nuclear testing.

Thomas, a member of the House-Senate Atomic Energy Committee, predicted the Kennedy Administration would announce "within a few days" whether it will resume nuclear explosions in the atmosphere.

His prediction that a U. S. announcement on atmospheric testing would be forthcoming soon was made after he re-

ceived an up-to-the-minute briefing from Atomic Energy Commission and Central Intelligence Agency officials.

The issue, according to Thomas, is whether such testing is needed to maintain the U. S. nuclear lead over Russia. Sen. Clinton Anderson (D-N. M.) said yesterday that a resumption of atmospheric testing "is necessary to the security of the United States and the free world."

"The Soviet Union, by testing intensively in the atmosphere, could have been making relatively large gains in nuclear weapons technology compared to our more limited gains from underground testing," Anderson said.

He added that "rationally conducted tests in the atmosphere could be limited to the generation of only a fraction of the fallout put into the atmosphere by the Soviets."

Russell told a reporter that he considered it essential to "conduct some atmospheric tests — until we perfect the neutron bomb." In addition, he said, this country should test at least one or two bombs carried by missiles.

Hypothetically, a neutron bomb would kill by emitting streams of deadly radiation. But if exploded high enough, or if the weapon were small enough, it could leave property intact because of its slight blast effect.